DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 082 098 CG 008 263

AUTHOR Bem, Sandra L.; Bem, Daryl J.
TITLE Training the Woman to Know Her Place: The Social Antecedents of Women in the World of Work.
INSTITUTION Pennsylvania State Dept. of Education, Harrisburg. Bureau of Pupil Personnel Services.
PUB DATE 73
NOTE 29p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Aspiration; Conditioning; *Counselor Role; Employment; *Females; *Role Conflict; Role Theory; *Sex Discrimination; *Socialization; Stereotypes

ABSTRACT

This report discusses the type of women found in the world of work, their reasons for employment, and their most frequent occupational choices. In paying particular attention to sex discrimination against women, this paper mentions pay differentials and access to lower status jobs, and attributes them partially to the effects of sex-role conditioning on women's aspirations and of America's sex-role ideology. The authors cite specific examples of socialization practices which influence women's expectations. Society introduces further psychological barriers in the form of the professed incompatibility of womanhood and career. The report pursues this topic by considering implications of a career on a woman's role as wife and as mother. The concluding section offers suggestions to the counselor who must acquaint young woman with their increased options. (LAA/Author)

ED 082098

Training the Woman to Know Her Place:

The Social Antecedents of Women in the World of Work

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
SANDRA & DARYL BEM
TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

CG 008 263

Pennsylvania Department of Education 1973

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

ED 082098

Training the Woman to Know Her Place:

The Social Antecedents of Women in the World of Work

This article was prepared by Sandra L. Bem and Daryl J. Bem, Department of Psychology, Stanford University, for the Pennsylvania Department of Education for distribution to all high school guidance counselors, counselor educators and chief school administrators in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Permission to reprint the article in published form or permission to reproduce this paper in quantity should be obtained from the authors at the following address: Department of Psychology, Stanford University, Stanford, California 94305.

Division of Pupil Personnel Services
Bureau of Instructional Support Services
Pennsylvania Department of Education
1973

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Milton J. Shapp, Governor

Department of Education
John C. Pittenger, Secretary

Office of Basic Education
Donald M. Carroll Jr., Commissioner
Harry K. Gerlach, Deputy Commissioner

Bureau of Instructional Support Services
George H. Love, Acting Director

Division of Pupil Personnel Services
Arthur L. Glenn, Chief

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Box 911
Harrisburg, Pa. 17126

CONTENTS

Women in the World of Work	1
Discrimination	3
Sex-Role Conditioning: Its Effects on Women's Aspirations	4
America's Sex-Role Ideology	4
Further Psychological Barriers	9
Biological Considerations	11
The Presumed Incompatibility of Family and Career	13
The Woman as Wife	13
The Woman as Mother	16
Preparing for the Future: The Role of the Guidance Counselor	19
References	24

TRAINING THE WOMAN TO KNOW HER PLACE: THE SOCIAL ANTECEDENTS OF WOMEN IN THE WORLD OF WORK[1]

Sandra L. Bem and Daryl J. Bem
Department of Psychology
Stanford University[2]

Women in the World of Work

Thirty-one million women work. That's 42% of all American women and over one-third of the labor force.[3] Moreover, married women work. Whereas in 1940, only 30% of all women workers were married, today that percentage has doubled: today 58% of the women in the labor force are married and living with their husbands. That's more than one-third of all married women.

Nor is it only the wives of the poor who work. Forty-three percent of the women whose husbands earn $5,000 to $7,000 per year are members of the labor force. And even in families where the husband earns $10,000 per year or more, 29% of the wives work outside the home.

Nor does the presence of children necessarily mean that women stop working. Almost half (45%) of all mothers with children between the ages of six and seventeen work outside the home. One-third (32%) of all mothers with children between the ages of three and five are working. And one-fourth (23%) of all mothers with children under the age of three are working. Furthermore, these percentages refer only to families in which the mother is living with her husband. As might be expected, the percentage of working mothers in father-absent families is even higher.

Finally, it is the woman with more education who is the most likely to work. Of those women who complete elementary school, 31% work outside the home. Of those who complete high school, 48% participate in the labor force. Of those who complete college, 54% are employed. And of those who complete at least one year of graduate study, 71% are involved in paid employment.

There is, then, no single type of woman worker. Women of all ages, women of every income and educational level, women both married and single, women with children and without: all participate in the labor force.

Why do women work? For the same reasons that men do. Some lucky women, like some lucky men, work for self-fulfillment. Approximately 20% of the married women who work do so for social or psychological reasons. But most women, like most men, work for economic reasons. Single women, widows, divorcees, and female heads of households obviously work in order to support themselves and their dependents. In addition, about half the married women who work

---

[1]Many of the ideas in this paper originally appeared in Bem & Bem (1970a).

[2]Formerly of Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

[3]Unless otherwise noted, all statistics in this section come from the U.S. Department of Labor (1969, 1970).

cite *"economic necessity"* as their major reason for taking a job, and still another 20% say that they work in order to earn extra money. They supplement their husbands' income; they buy something special which their families would not be able to afford otherwise–a new home or a college education; and they raise their families' general standard of living.

What kinds of jobs do women have? Inferior ones–compared to men. How much are women paid? Compared to men–not much.

Women are concentrated in a very small number of occupations. One-third of all working women are concentrated in only seven jobs: secretary, retail sales clerk, household worker, elementary school teacher, bookkeeper, waitress, and nurse. An additional one-third are found in the following twenty-nine occupations:

Sewer, stitcher
Typist
Cashier
Cook
Telephone operator
Babysitter
Hospital attendant
Laundry operative
Assembler
Apparel operative
Hairdresser
Packer, wrapper
Stenographer
High school teacher
Office machine worker
Checker, examiner, inspector
Practical nurse
Kitchen worker
Chambermaid, maid
Housekeeper (private home)
Electrical machinery operative
Receptionist
Charwoman, cleaner
Housekeeper, stewardess
Dressmaker, seamstress
Counter, fountain worker
File clerk
Musician, music teacher
Fabric mill operative

In fact, seventy-eight percent (78%) of all working women–as compared to 40% of working men–are employed as clerical workers, service workers, factory workers, and sales clerks. Yes, women do work, but they work in dead-end, low-status jobs, not in careers. Indeed, only four of the jobs listed above qualify as professions: elementary school teacher, secondary school teacher, music teacher, and nurse.

Only four million women–15% of all women workers–are classified as professional or technical workers, and even this figure is misleading. For the single occupation of noncollege teacher absorbs nearly half of these women and an additional 25% are nurses.[4] Fewer than 5% of all professional women-fewer than 1% of all women workers–fill those positions which, to most Americans, connote *"professional"*: physician, lawyer, judge, engineer, scientist, editor, reporter, college president, professor, or senator. Only one out of every 25 working women (4%) is a manager, usually in a small retail store.

---

[4] The tendency of both parents and guidance counselors to overemphasize teaching as *"the career for women"* is now having unfortunate consequences. According to the U.S. Office of Education, 100,000 teachers who completed their training in 1970 had to find something else to do. The teacher glut is overwhelming.

Economic statistics tell the same story. In 1968, the median income of full-time women workers was $4,457. The comparable figure for men was over $3,000 higher. According to the Labor Department, a female college graduate working full-time can expect to earn less per year than a male high-school dropout. This is the very best that women have been able to achieve in the world of work.

Why? Why jobs rather than growing careers? Why nurse rather than physician, teacher rather than principal, secretary rather than executive, stewardess rather than pilot? There are three basic answers to this question: 1) discrimination, 2) sex-role conditioning, and 3) the presumed incompatibility of family and career.

Discrimination

As noted above, women earn less than men, and the gap is widening. In 1955, women earned 64% of what men did; by 1968, that percentage had shrunk to 58%. Sixty percent of full-time female workers earn less than $5000 per year; only 20% of full-time male workers fall below this level. Only 3% of female workers earn above $10,000 per year; 28% of male workers do so. And, according to a survey of 206 companies, female college graduates in 1970 were offered jobs which paid approximately $43 per month less than those offered to their male counterparts in the same college major.

There are two reasons for this pay differential. First, in every category of occupation, women are employed in the lesser-skilled, lower-paid positions. Even in the clerical field, where 73% of the workers are women, females are relegated to the lower-status positions, and so they earn only 65% of what male clerical workers earn. The second reason is discrimination in its purest form: unequal pay for equal work.

New laws should begin to correct both of these situations. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 prohibits employers from discriminating on the basis of sex in the payment of wages for equal work on jobs requiring equal skill, effort, and responsibility, and which are performed under similar working conditions. In a landmark ruling on May 18, 1970, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered that $250,000 in back pay be paid to women employed by a single New Jersey glass company. This decision followed a two-year court battle by the Labor Department after it found that the company was paying men selector-packers 21.5 cents more per hour than women doing the same work. In a similar case, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals ordered a major can company to pay more than $100,000 in back wages to women doing equal work. According to the Labor Department, an estimated $17-million is owed to women in back pay. In Western Pennsylvania alone, there had been 781 unequal-pay cases as of mid-1970, and 31 firms have already been ordered to pay over $450,000 in back wages. Moreover, a 1972 amendment extended this Act to cover executive, administrative and professional employees as well.

But to enjoy equal pay, women must also have access to equal jobs. Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin--and sex. Although the sex provision was treated as a joke at the time (and was originally introduced by a Southern Congressman in an attempt to defeat the bill), the Equal

Employment Opportunities Commission discovered in its first year of operation that 40% or more of the complaints warranting investigation charged discrimination on the basis of sex (Bird, 1969).

Title VII has served as one of the most effective instruments in helping to achieve sex equality in the world of work. According to a report by the E.E.O.C., nearly 6,000 charges of sex discrimination were filed with that agency in 1971 alone, a 62% increase over the previous year. Every day the newspapers report new occupational breakthroughs for women -- including such all male domains as the FBI and the ships of the U.S. Navy.

Of course, the most significant legislative breakthrough in the area of sex and equality was the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment by both houses of Congress in 1972. The ERA simply states that *"Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."* This amendment had been introduced into every session of Congress since 1923, and its passage now is clearly an indication of the changing role of the American woman. All of the various ramifications of this amendment are hard to predict, but it is clear that it will have profound consequences in private as well as public life.

In the past, women have had to adjust their aspirations in order to accommodate to the pervasive pattern of discrimination in various male-dominated occupations. Now woman may finally begin to plan their careers free from such artificial constraints.

Sex-Role Conditioning: Its Effects on Woman's Aspirations

But even if all discrimination were to end tomorrow, nothing very drastic would change. For job discrimination is only part of the problem. It does impede women who choose to become lawyers or managers or physicians. But it does not, by itself, help us to understand why so many women *"choose"* to be secretaries or nurses rather than executives or physicians; why only 3% of ninth-grade girls -- as compared to 25% of the boys -- *"Choose"* careers in science or engineering; or why 63% of America's married women *"choose"* not to work at all. It certainly does not explain those young women whose vision of the future includes only marriage, children, and living happily ever after; who may at some point *"choose"* to take a job, but who almost never *"choose"* to pursue a career. Discrimination frustrates choices already made; something more pernicious perverts the motivation to choose.

America's Sex-Role Ideology

That *"something"* is an unconscious ideology about the nature of the female sex, an ideology which constricts the emerging self-image of the female child and the nature of her aspirations from the very first; an ideology which leads even those Americans who agree that a black skin should not uniquely qualify *its* owner for janitorial or domestic service to assume that the possession of a uterus uniquely qualifies *its* owner for precisely such service.

Consider, for example, the 1968 student rebellion at Columbia University. Students from the radical left took over some administration buildings in the name of equalitarian ideals which they accused the university of flouting. Here were the most militant spokesmen one could hope to find in the cause of equalitarian ideals. But no sooner had they occupied the buildings than the male militants blandly turned to their sisters-in-arms and assigned them the task of preparing the food, while they-the menfolk--would presumably plan further strategy. The reply these males

received was the reply they deserved, and the fact that domestic tasks behind the barricades were desegregated across the sex line that day is an everlasting tribute to the class consciousness of the ladies of the left.

But these conscious coeds are not typical, for the unconscious assumptions about a woman's *"natural"* talents (or lack of them) are at least as prevalent among women as they are among men. A psychologist named Philip Goldberg (1968) demonstrated this by asking female college students to rate a number of professional articles from each of six fields. The articles were collated into two equal sets of booklets, and the names of the authors were changed so that the identical article was attributed to a male author (e.g. John T. McKay) in one set of booklets and to a female author (e.g., Joan T. McKay) in the other set. Each student was asked to read the articles in her booklet and to rate them for value, competence, persuasiveness, writing style, and so forth.

As he had anticipated, Goldberg found that the identical article received significantly lower ratings when it was attributed to a female author than when it was attributed to a male author. He had predicted this result for articles from professional fields generally considered the province of men, like law or city planning, but to his surprise, these coeds also downgraded articles from the fields of dietetics and elementary school education when they were attributed to female authors. In other words, these students rated the male authors as better at everything, agreeing with Aristotle that *"we should regard the female nature as afflicted with a natural defectiveness."* We have repeated this same experiment informally in our own classrooms, both at Stanford and at Carnegie-Mellon, and we've discovered that male students show this same implicit prejudice against female authors that Goldberg's female students showed. Such is the nature of America's unconscious ideology about women!

When does this ideology begin in the life of a young girl? How does it limit her horizons so that she never aspires to *be* a Senator or an astronaut, but only to *marry* one?

From the day a newborn child is dressed in pink, she is given *"special"* treatment. Perhaps because they are thought to be more fragile, six-month-old infant girls are actually touched, spoken to, and hovered over more by their mothers while they are playing than are infant boys (Goldberg & Lewis 1969). Research even shows that mothers smile, touch, and talk to their female infants more than their male infants as early as two days of age! Differential treatment of the sexes can't start much earlier than that!

As children grow older, boys are encouraged to be aggressive, competitive, and independent, whereas girls continue to be rewarded, especially by their fathers, for being passive and dependent (Barry, Bacon, & Child, 1957; Sears, Maccoby, & Levin, 1957). Little boys climb trees and get dirty; little girls are expected to stay in the yard and keep their dresses clean. Little boys play with water pistols and fire trucks; little girls play with dolls and tea sets. Little *"men"* fight back; little girls cry and run. Little boys visit daddy's office while little girls help mommy bake a cake. And we know of at least one little girl whose goal of becoming a doctor was quickly *"corrected"* by her first grade teacher: every little boy in the class got to play the part of doctor in the class play; every little girl got to play the role of nurse.

As children begin to read, the storybook characters become the images and the models that little boys and little girls aspire to become. What kind of role does the female play in the world of children's literature? The fact is that there aren't even very many females in that world. One survey, reported in the Book Review section of the *N. Y. Times* (Fisher, 1970), found that five times as many males as females appear in the titles; the fantasy world of Dr. Seuss is almost entirely male; and even animals and machines are represented as male. When females do appear, they are noteworthy for what they do *not* do. They do not drive cars and they seldom even ride bicycles. (In one story in which a girl does ride a bicycle, it's a two-seater and the girl is seated behind the boy!) Boys climb trees and fish and roll in the leaves and skate; girls watch or fall down or get dizzy. Girls are never doctors. And although they may be nurses or librarians or teachers, they are never principals. There seems to be only one children's book about mothers who work, and it concludes that what mothers love *"best of all"* is *"being your very own Mommy and coming home to you."* And although this is no doubt true of many daddys as well, no book about working fathers has ever found it necessary to apologize in quite the same way.

As children grow older, more explicit sex-role training is introduced. Boys are encouraged to take more of an interest in mathematics and science. Boys, not girls, are given chemistry sets and microscopes for Christmas. Moreover, all children quickly learn that mommy is proud to be a moron when it comes to mathematics and science, whereas daddy is a little ashamed if he doesn't know all about these things. When a young boy returns from school all excited about biology, he is almost certain to be encouraged to think of becoming a physician. A girl with similar enthusiasm is told that she might want to consider nurse's training later so she can have *"an interesting job to fall back upon in case--God forbid--she ever needs to support herself."* A very different kind of encouragement. And any girl who doggedly persists in her enthusiasm for science is likely to find her parents as horrified by the prospect of a permanent love affair with physics as they would be either by the prospect of an interracial marriage or, horror of horrors, no marriage at all.

These socialization practices quickly take their toll. By nursery school age, for example, boys are already asking more questions about how and why things work (Smith, 1933). In first and second grade, when asked to suggest ways of improving various toys, boys do better on the fire truck and girls do better on the nurse's kit; but by third grade, boys do better regardless of the toy presented (Torrance, 1962).

In elementary school, with its large number of female teachers and its emphasis on being *"good"* or docile, girls have a momentary advantage; pleasing the teacher and doing good school work are more appropriate for girls than for boys. Not surprisingly, girls surpass boys in nearly all of their schoolwork in the early grades. And although some of this difference could be due to innate differences in the developmental timetables between boys and girls, research shows that young children do regard school as *"feminine"* (Kagan, 1964b).

Soon however, school becomes more in tune with the earlier socialization of the boys. They are now reminded that doing well will contribute to their later vocational success, and they continue to receive special encouragement in mathematics and science. By the ninth grade, 25%

of the boys, but only 3% of the girls, are considering careers in science or engineering (Flanagan, unpublished; cited in Kagan, 1964a). When they apply for college, boys and girls are about equal on verbal aptitude tests, but boys score significantly higher on mathematical aptitude tests–about 60 points higher on the College Board examinations, for example (Brown, 1965, p. 162). Moreover, girls improve their mathematical performance if the problems are simply reworded so that they deal with cooking and gardening, even though the abstract reasoning required for solution remains exactly the same (Milton, 1958). Clearly, the girl's confidence in her ability to tackle a mathematical problem has been seriously undermined.

But these effects in mathematics and science are only part of the story. A girl's long training in passivity and dependence appears to exact an even higher toll from her overall motivation to achieve, to search for new and independent ways of doing things, and to welcome the challenge of new and unsolved problems. In one study, for example, elementary school girls were more likely to try solving a puzzle by imitating an adult, whereas the boys were more likely to search for a novel solution not provided by the adult (McDavid, 1959). In another puzzle-solving study, young girls asked for help and approval from adults more frequently than the boys; and, when given the opportunity to return to puzzles a second time, the girls were more likely to rework those they had already solved, whereas the boys were more likely to try puzzles they had been unable to solve previously (Crandall & Rabson, 1960). A girl's sigh of relief is almost audible when she marries and retires from the outside world of novel and unsolved problems.

This, of course, is the most conspicuous outcome of all: The majority of America's women become full-time homemakers. And of those who work, 78% end up in dead-end jobs as clerical workers, service workers, factory workers, or sales clerks. They do not pursue challenging or even well-paying careers. This *"homogenization"* of America's women is the major consequence of our sex-role ideology.

The important point is not that the role of homemaker is necessarily inferior, but rather that our society is managing to consign a large segment of its population to the role of homemaker–either with or without a dead-end job–solely on the basis of sex just as inexorably as it has in the past consigned the individual with the black skin to the role of janitor or domestic. The important point is that in spite of their unique identities, the majority of America's women end up in virtually the *same* role.

Even an I.Q. in the genius range does not guarantee that a woman's unique potential will find expression. This sobering fact was revealed in a famous study of over 1,300 men and women whose I.Q.'s averaged 151. These men and women were followed over a period of 35 years, beginning when they were about 10 years old (Terman & Oden, 1959). Today, eighty-six percent of the gifted men in this study have achieved prominence in professional and managerial occupations.

But what about the highly gifted women? Of those who are employed, 37% are nurses, librarians, social workers, and noncollege teachers. An additional 20% are secretaries, stenographers, bookkeepers, and office workers! Only 11% are in the higher professions of law, medicine, college teaching, engineering, science, economics, and the like.

Moreover, these statistics refer only to a minority of the highly gifted women in this study.

For even at age 44, well after their children had gone to school, 61% of these highly gifted women are full-time homemakers!

And what does a full-time homemaker do with her time--regardless of I.Q.? Time studies show that she spends the equivalent of a full working day, 7.1 hours, in preparing meals, cleaning house, laundering, mending, shopping, and doing other household tasks. In other words, 43% of her waking time is spent in activity that would command an hourly wage on the open market well below the federally-set minimum for menial industrial work.

The point is not how little she would earn if she did these things in someone else's home; she will be doing them in her own home for free. The point is that this use of time is virtually the same for homemakers with college degrees and for those with less than a grade school education, for women married to professional men and for women married to blue-collar workers. Talent, education, ability, interests, motivation: all are irrelevant. In our society, being female uniquely qualifies an individual for domestic work--either by itself or in conjunction with typing, teaching, nursing, or unskilled labor.

It is true, of course, that most women have several hours of leisure time per day, and it is here, we are often told, that each woman can express her unique identity. Thus, politically interested women can join the League of Women Voters; women with humane interests can become part-time Gray Ladies; women who love music can raise money for the symphony. Protestant women play Canasta; Jewish women play Mah-Jongg; brighter women of all denominations and faculty wives play bridge.

But politically interested *men* serve in legislatures; *men* with humane interests become physicians or clinical psychologists; *men* who love music play in the symphony. In other words, why should a woman's unique identity determine only the periphery of her life rather than its central core?

Again, the important point is not that the role of homemaker is necessarily inferior, but that a woman's unique identity has been rendered irrelevant. Consider the following *"predictability test."* When a baby boy is born, it is difficult to predict what he will be doing 25 years later. We cannot say whether he will be an artist, a doctor, or a guidance counselor because he will be permitted to develop and to fulfill his own unique potential, particularly if he is white and middle-class. But if that same newborn child is a girl, we can usually predict with confidence how she is likely to be spending her time 25 years later. Her individuality doesn't have to be considered; it is irrelevant.

The socialization of the American male has closed off certain options for him too. Men are discouraged from developing certain desirable traits such as tenderness and sensitivity just as surely as women are discouraged from being assertive and *"too bright."* Young boys are encouraged to be incompetent at cooking and child care just as surely as young girls are urged to be incompetent at mathematics and science. The elimination of sex-role stereotyping implies that each individual would be encouraged to *"do his own thing."* Men and women would no longer be stereotyped by society's definitions of masculine and feminine. If sensitivity, emotionality, and warmth are desirable *human* characteristics, then they are desirable for men

as well as for women. If independence, assertiveness, and serious intellectural commitment are desirable *human* characteristics, then they are desirable for women as well as for men. And, it is undoubtedly true that many men today would have been more fulfilled if their socialization had permitted them to engage in activity currently stereotyped as female--child care, for example.

Thus, it is true that a man's options are also limited by our society's sex-role ideology, but as the *"predictability test"* reveals, it is still the woman in our society whose identity is rendered irrelevant by America's socialization practices.

Further Psychological Barriers

But what of the woman who arrives at age 21 still motivated to be challenged and fulfilled by a growing career? Is she free to choose a career if she cares to do so? Or is there something standing even in her way?

There is. Even the women who has managed to finesse society's attempt to rob her of her career motivations is likely to find herself blocked by society's trump card: the feeling that one cannot have a career and be a successful woman simultaneously. A competent and motivated woman is thus caught in a double-bind which few men have ever faced. She must worry not only about failure, but also about success. If she fails in her achievement needs, she must live with the knowledge that she is not living up to her potential. But if she succeeds, she must live with the knowledge that she is not living up to her own--or society's--conception of a feminine woman.

This conflict was strikingly revealed in a study which required college women to complete the following story: *"After first-term finals, Anne finds herself at the top of her medical-school class"* (Horner, 1969). The stories were then examined for unconscious, internal conflict about success and failure. The women in this study all had high intellectual ability and histories of academic success. They were the very women who could have successful careers. And yet, over two-thirds of their stories revealed a clearcut inability to cope with the concept of a feminine, yet career-oriented woman.

The most common *"fear-of-success"* stories showed strong fears of social rejection as a result of success. The women in this group showed anxiety about becoming unpopular, unmarriageable, and lonely:

> Anne starts proclaiming her surprise and joy. Her fellow classmates are so disgusted with her behavior that they jump on her in a body and beat her. She is maimed for life.
>
> Anne is an acne-faced bookworm....She studies twelve hours a day, and lives at home to save money. *"Well, it certainly paid off. All the Friday and Saturday nights without dates, fun-- I'll be the best woman doctor alive."* And yet a twinge of sadness comes through--she wonders what she really has...
>
> Anne doesn't want to be number one in her class....She feels she shouldn't rank so high because of social reasons. She drops to ninth and then marries the boy who graduates number one.

In the second *"fear-of-success"* category were stories in which the women seemed concerned about definitions of womanhood. These stories expressed guilt and despair over success and doubts about their femininity and normality.

> Unfortunately Anne no longer feels so certain that she really wants to be a doctor. She is worried about herself and wonders if perhaps she is not normal....Anne decides not to continue with her medical work but to take courses that have a deeper personal meaning to her.
>
> Anne feels guilty....She will finally have a nervous breakdown and quit medical school and marry a successful young doctor.

A third group of stories could not even face up to the conflict between having a career and being a woman. These stories simply denied the possibility that any woman could be so successful.

> Anne is a code name for a nonexistent person created by a group of med students. They take turns writing for Anne....
>
> Anne is really happy she's on top, though Tom is higher than she--though that's as it should be. Anne doesn't mind Tom winning.
>
> Anne is talking to her counselor. Counselor says she will make a fine nurse.

By way of contrast, here is a typical story written not about Anne, but about John:

> John has worked very hard and his long hours of study have paid off....He is thinking about his girl, Cheri, whom he will marry at the end of med school. He realizes he can give her all the things she desires after he becomes established. He will go on in med school and be successful in the long run.

Nevertheless, there were a few women in the study who welcomed the prospect of success:

> Anne is quite a lady--not only is she top academically, but she is liked and admired by her fellow students--quite a trick in a man-dominated field. She is brilliant--but she is also a woman. She will continue to be at or near the top. And...always a lady.

Hopefully the day is approaching when as many *"Anne"* stories as *"John"* stories will have happy endings. But notice that even this story finds it necessary to affirm repeatedly that femininity is not necessarily destroyed by academe. One would never encounter a comparable story written about John who, although brilliant and at the top of his class, is *"still a man, still a man, still a man."*

It seems unlikely that anyone in our society would view these *"fear-of-success"* stories as portraits of mental health. But even our concept of mental health has been distorted by America's sex-role stereotypes. Here we must indict our own profession of psychology. A recent survey

of seventy-nine clincially-trained psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers, both male and female, revealed a double standard of mental health (Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, & Vogel, 1970). That is, even professional clinicians have two different concepts of mental health, one for men and one for women; and these concepts parallel the sex-role stereotypes prevalent in our society. Thus, according to these clincicians, a woman is to be regarded as healthier and more mature if she is: more submissive, less independent, less adventurous, more easily influenced, less aggressive, less competitive, more excitable in minor crises, more susceptible to hurt feelings, more emotional, more conceited about her appearance, less objective, and more antagonistic toward math and science! But this was the very same description which these clinicians used to characterize an unhealthy, immature man or an unhealthy, immature adult (sex unspecified)! The equation is clear: Mature woman equals immature adult.

Given this concept of a mature woman, is it any wonder that few women ever aspire toward challenging and fulfilling careers? In order to have a career, a woman will probably need to become relatively more dominant, independent, adventurous, aggressive, competitive, and objective, and relatively less excitable, emotional and conceited than our ideal of femininity requires. If she were a man (or an adult, sex unspecified), these would all be considered positive traits. But because she is a woman, these same traits will bring her disapproval. She must then either be strong enough to have her *"femininity"* questioned; or she must behave in the prescribed feminine manner and accept second-class status, as an adult and as a professional.

And, of course, should a woman faced with this conflict seek professional help, hoping to summon the strength she will need to pursue her career goals, the advice she is likely to receive will be of virtually no use. For, as this study reveals, even professional counselors have been contaminated by the sex-role ideology.

It is frequently argued that a 21-year-old woman is perfectly free to choose a career if she cares to do so. No one is standing in her way. But this agrument conveniently overlooks the fact that our society has spent twenty long years carefully marking the woman's ballot for her, and so it has nothing to lose in that twenty-first year by pretending to let her cast it for the alternative of her choice. Society has controlled not her alternatives, but her motivation to choose any but one of those alternatives. The so-called freedom-to-choose is illusory, and it cannot be invoked to justify the society which controls the motivation to choose.

Biological Considerations

Up to this point, we have argued that the differing life patterns of men and women in our society can be chiefly accounted for by cultural conditioning. The most common counterargument to this view, of course, is the biological one. The biological argument suggests that there may really be inborn differences between men and women in, say, independence or mathematical ability. Or that there may be biological factors beyond the fact that women can become pregnant and nurse children which uniquely dictate that they, but not men, should stay home all day or shun serious professional careers. What this argument suggests is that maybe female physiology is responsible somehow. One difficulty with this argument, of course, is that

female physiology would have to be different in other cultures. In the Soviet Union, for example, one-third of the engineers and 75% of the physicians are women(Dodge, 1966). In America, by way of contrast, women consitute less than 1% of the engineers and only 7% of the physicians. Female physiology *is* different, and it may account for some of the psychological differences between the sexes (e.g., Broverman, Klaiber, Kobayashi, & Vogel, 1968), but most psychologists believe that it is girls' sex-role conditioning which is primarily responsible for the fact that so few women emerge from childhood with the motivation to pursue careers.

The fact is, however, that the answer to this nature-nurture controversy is simply not known. Until a society is willing to raise its boys and its girls with equal opportunity to choose roles for themse' es--without being conditioned into a stereotype of what is appropriate for a man or a woman, it will simply be impossible to separate the effects of biology from the effects of cultural conditioning.

If biological differences do happen to exist between men and women in traits like *"nurturance,"* that is, in their inborn motivations to care for children, then this will simply show up automatically in the final distributions of men and women across the various roles: Relatively more women will choose to become pediatricians or child psychiatrists. To say that an average difference exists between men and women does not imply that all women will be nurturant or that all men will not be. We know that a biological difference exists between man and women in height, and yet there are many short men and many tall women. No matter what biological differences there may be between the sexes, there will always be a great deal of *"overlap."* That is, there will always be even greater variation within a sex than there is between the sexes. The elemination of sex-role stereotyping does not imply that there will necessarily be equality of outcome, an equal number of men and women in each and every role, but rather that there will be the widest possible variation in outcome consistent with the range of individual differences among people, regardless of sex.

Acutally, the biological argument is irrevelant. The reason can best be illustrated with an analogy. Suppose that every black American boy were to be socialized to become a jazz musician on the assumption that he has a *"natural"* talent in that direction; or suppose that parents and counselors should subtly discourage him from other pursuits because it is considered *"inappropriate"* for black men to become physicians or physicists. Most Americans would disapprove. But suppose it *could* be demonstrated that black Americans, *on the average,* did possess an inborn better sense of rhythm than white Americans. Would *that* justify ignoring the unique characteristics of a *particular* black youngster from the very beginning and specifically socializing him to become a musician? We don't think so. Similarly, as long as a woman's socialization does not nurture her uniqueness, but treats her only as a member of a group on the basis of some assumed *average* characteristic, she will not be prepared to realize her own potential in the way that the values of individuality and self-fulfillment imply that she should.

The irony of the biological argument is that it does not take biological differences seriously enough. That is, it fails to recognize the range of biological differences between individuals within the same sex. Thus, recent research has revealed that biological factors do help to determine

many personality traits. The traits of dominance and submissiveness, for example, have been found to have large inheritable components; in other words, biological factors *do* have the potential for partially determining how dominant or submissive an individual, male or female, will turn out to be. But the effects of this biological potential could be detected only in males (Gottesman, 1963). This suggests that perhaps only the males in our culture are raised with sufficient flexibility, with sufficient latitude given to their biological differences, for their *"natural"* or biologically determined potential to shine through. Females, on the other hand, are apparently subjected to a socialization which so ignores their unique attributes that even the effects of biology seem to be swamped.

The Presumed Incompatibility of Family and Career

If we were to ask the average American woman why she is not pursuing a full-time career, she would probably not say that discrimination had discouraged her; nor would she recognize the pervasive effect of her sex-role conditioning. What she probably would say is that a career, no matter how desirable, is simply incompatible with the role of wife and mother.

As recently as the turn of the century, and in less technological societies today, this incompatibility between career and family was, in fact, decisive. Women died in their forties, and they were pregnant or nursing during most of their adult lives. Moreover, the work that a less technological society requires places a premium on mobility and physical strength. Thus, the historical division of labor between the sexes--the man away at work and the woman at home with the children--was a biological necessity. Today it is not.

Today, the work that our technological society requires is primarily cognitive in nature; women have virtually complete control over their reproductive lives; and most important of all, the average American woman now lives to age 74 and has her last child by age 26. Thus, by the time a women is 33 or so, her children all have more important things to do with their daytime hours than to spend them entertaining an adult woman who has nothing fulfilling to do during the second half of her life span.

But social forms have a way of outliving the necessities which gave rise to them. Thus, today's female adolescent continues to plan for a 19th century life style in a 20th century world. A Gallup poll has found that young women give no thought to life after forty (Gallup & Hill, 1962). They plan to graduate from high school, perhaps go to college, and then get married. Period.

The Woman as Wife

At some level, of course, this kind of planning is *"realistic."* Because most women do grow up to be wives and mothers, and because, for many women, this has often meant that they would be leaving the labor force during the child-rearing years, a career is not really feasible. After all, a career involves long-term commitment and perhaps even some sacrifice on the part of the family. Furthermore, as every *"successful"* woman knows, a wife's appropriate role is to encourage her husband in *his* career. The good wife puts her husband through school, endures

the family's early financial difficulties without a whimper, and, if her husband's career should suddenly dictate a move to another city, sees to it that the transition is accomplished as painlessly as possible. The good wife is selfless. And to be seriously concerned about one's own career is selfish--if one happens to be female, that is. With these kinds of constraints imposed upon the work-life of the married woman, perhaps it would be *"unrealistic"* for her to seriously aspire toward a career rather than a job.

There is some evidence of discontent among these *"selfless"* women, however. A 1962 Gallup poll (Gallup & Hill, 1962) revealed that only 10% of American women would want their daughters to live their lives the way they did. These mothers wanted their daughters to get more education and to marry later. And a 1970 study of women married to top Chicago-area business and professional men (Ringo, 1970) revealed that if these women could live their lives over again, they would pursue careers.

Accordingly, the traditional conception of the husband-wife relationship is now being challenged, not so much because of this widespread discontent among older, married women, but because it violates two of the most basic values of today's college generation. These values concern personal growth, on the one hand, and interpersonal relationships on the other. The first emphasizes individuality and self-fulfillment; the second stresses openness, honesty, and equality in all human relationships.

Because they see the traditional male-female relationship as incompatible with these basic values, today's young people are experimenting with alternatives to the traditional marriage pattern. Although a few are testing out ideas like communal living, most are searching for satisfactory modifications of the husband-wife relationship within the context of marriage. And an increasing number of young people are entering marriages very much like the following hypothetical example:

> "Both my wife and I earned college degrees in our respective disciplines. I turned down a superior job offer in Oregon and accepted a slightly less desirable position in New York where my wife would have more opportunities for part-time work in her specialty. Although I would have preferred to live in a suburb, we purchased a home near my wife's job so that she could have an office at home where she would be when the children returned from school. Because my wife earns a good salary, she can easily afford to pay a housekeeper to do her major household chores. My wife and I share all other tasks around the house equally. For example, she cooks the meals, but I do the laundry for her and help her with many of her other household tasks."

Without questioning the basic happiness of such a marriage or its appropriateness for many couples, we can legitimately ask if such a marriage is, in fact, an instance of interpersonal equality. Have all the hidden assumptions about the woman's *"natural"* role really been eliminated? Has the traditional ideology really been exorcised? There is a very simple test. If the marriage is truly equalitarian, then its description should retain the same flavor and tone even if the roles of the husband and wife were to be reversed:

> "Both my husband and I earned college degrees in our respective disciplines. I turned down a superior job offer in Oregon and accepted a slightly less desirable position in New York where my husband would have more opportunities for part-time work in his specialty. Although I would have preferred to live in a suburb, we purchased a home near my husband's job so that he could have an office at home where he would be when the children returned from school. Because my husband earns a good salary, he can easily afford to pay a housekeeper to do his major household chores. My husband and I share all other tasks around the house equally. For example, he cooks the meals, but I do the laundry for him and help him with many of his other household tasks."

It seems unlikely that many men or women in our society would mistake the marriage *just* described as either equalitarian or desirable, and thus it becomes apparent that the ideology about the woman's *"natural"* role unconsciously permeates the entire fabric of such *"quasi-equalitarian"* marriages. It is true that the wife gains some measure of equality when she can have a career rather than a job and when her career can influence the final place of residence. But why is it the unquestioned assumption that the husband's career solely determines the initial set of alternatives that are to be considered? Why is it the wife who automatically seeks the part-time position? Why is it *her* housekeeper rather than *their* housekeeper? Why *her* laundry? Why *her* household tasks? And so forth throughout the entire relationship.

The important point here is not that such marriages are bad or that their basic assumptions of inequality produce unhappy, frustrated women. Quite the contrary. It is the very happiness of the wives in such marriages that reveals society's smashing success in socializing its women. It is a measure of the distance our society must yet traverse toward the goals of self-fulfillment and interpersonal equality that such marriages are widely characterized as utopian and fully equalitarian. It is a mark of how well the woman has been kept in her place that the husband in such a marriage is often idolized by women, including his wife. Why? Because he *"permits"* her to squeeze a career into the interstices of their marriage as long as his own career is not unduly inconvenienced. Thus is the white man blessed for exercising his power benignly while his *"natural"* right to that power forever remains unquestioned. Such is the subtlety of America's unconscious ideology about women.

In fact, however, even these *"benign"* inequities are now being challenged. More and more young couples are entering marriages of full equality, marriages in which both partners pursue careers or outside commitments which carry equal weight when all important decisions are to be made, marriages in which both husband and wife accept some compromise in the growth of their respective careers. Certainly such marriages have more tactical difficulties than more traditional ones: It is more difficult to coordinate two independent lives than just one. The point is that it is not possible to predict ahead of time *on the basis of sex* who will be doing the compromising at any given point of decision.

It is clear that the man or woman who places career above all else ought not to enter an equalitarian marriage. The man would do better to marry a traditional wife, a wife who will

make whatever sacrifices his career necessitates. The woman would do better–in our present society–to remain single. For an equalitarian marriage is not designed for extra efficiency, but rather for double fulfillment.

An equalitarian marriage also embraces a division of labor within the home which satisfies what we like to call *"the roommate test."* That is, the labor is divided just as it is when two men or two women room together in college or set up a bachelor apartment together. Errands and domestic chores are assigned by preference, agreement, flipping a coin, given to hired help, or–as is sometimes the case–simply left undone.

To their elders, who find this kind of an arrangement within marriage quite foreign to their thinking, these forward-looking men and women propose the following analogy: Suppose that a white male college student decided to room or set up a bachelor apartment with a black male friend. Surely the white student would not blithely assume that his black roommate was to handle all the domestic chores. Nor would his conscience allow him to do so so even in the unlikely event that his roommate would say: *"No, that's okay. I like doing housework. I'd be happy to do it."* The white student would still not be comfortable if he took advantage of this offer, because both he and America have finally realized that he would be taking advantage of the fact that our society had socialized such a roommate to be *"happy"* with so blatant an inequity. But now change this hypothetical black roommate to a female marriage partner, and somehow the student's conscience goes to sleep. At most it is quickly tranquilized by the comforting thought that *"she is happiest when she is ironing for her loved one."*

The Woman as Mother[5]

In all marriages, whether traditional, quasi-equalitarian, or fully equalitarian, the real question surrounding a mother's career will probably continue to be the well-being of the children. All parents want to be certain that they are doing the best for their children, and that they are not depriving them in any important way, either materially or psychologically. What this has always meant in most families that could afford it was that mother would devote herself to her children on a full-time basis. Women have even been convinced–by their mothers and by the so-called experts-that there is something wrong with them if they want to do otherwise.

For example, according to Dr. Spock (1963), any woman who find full-time motherhood unfulfilling is showing *"a residue of difficult relationships in her own childhood."* If a vacation doesn't solve the problem, then she is probably having emotional problems which can be relieved *"through regular counseling in a family social agency, or, if severe, through psychiatric treatment....Any mother of a preschool child who is considering a job should discuss the issues with a social worker before making her decision."* The message is clear: If you don't feel that your two-year-old is a stimulating companion, then you are probably neurotic!

Actually, this is the first time in history that mothers have even been able to think about the possibility of devoting themselves to their children on a full-time basis. Never before has motherhood been a full-time occupation for any adult woman. In the past, women had to spend a great deal of time and energy running the household: baking bread, churning butter, preserving

[5]Many of the ideas in this section are from Rossi (1965).

vegetables and sewing clothing. Children were not neglected, but they were freer to develop the autonomy and initiative and independence so necessary for adulthood. Only in recent times has the homemaker had time to worry about her child's development, to organize his social life, and to discuss his problems.

In fact, there is some evidence that full-time mothering may actually be harmful. Too often, the full-time mother tries to live through her children. The mother whose own identity is defined solely through her children's accomplishments cannot leave her children really free to strive on their own and to learn from their own mistakes. For the child's mistakes are her failures, and so her emotional strength is weakest at that moment when her support is needed the most. Children cannot be hovered over like hothouse plants. Without some identity of her own, the full-time mother is inevitably tempted to bind her children to her in a dependency relationship which only makes it more difficult for them to step into maturity and adulthood. Thus, a high percentage of the psychoneurotic discharges from the Army during World War II was traced to these young soldiers' over-dependence on their mothers (Strecker, 1946). Furthermore, the counseling centers of most college campuses are filled with young men and young women who need help in freeing themselves from their dependency on their parents, particularly their mothers.

But when these same female students themselves become mothers, they will be encouraged to perpetuate this cycle of dependency; they will be discouraged from even taking a job because *"the children might suffer."*

Research does not support the view that children suffer when mother works, however. Although it came as a surprise to most researchers in the area, maternal employment in and of itself does not seem to have any negative effects on the children; and part-time work actually seems to benefit the children. Children of working mothers are no more likely than children of non-working mothers to be delinquent or nervous or withdrawn or anti-social; they are no more likely to show neurotic symptoms; they are no more likely to perform poorly in school; and they are no more likely to feel deprived of maternal affection. Daughters of working mothers are more likely to want to work themselves and, when asked to name the one woman they most admire, they are more likely to name their own mothers! (Nye & Hoffman, 1963). If only this last fact could be disseminated to every working mother in America because the other thing that's true of almost every working mother is that she thinks she might be hurting her children and she feels guilty. If only she knew how much her daughter admired her. Finally, research has shown that the worst mothers are those who would like to work, but who stay home out of a sense of duty (Yarrow, Scott, de Leeuw, & Heinig, 1962). The major conclusion from all the research on maternal employment seems to be this: What matters is the quality of a mother's relationship with her children, not the time of day it happens to be administered. The conclusion should come as no surprise to anyone; successful fathers have been demonstrating it for years. Some fathers are great, some fathers stink, and almost all of them work eight hours a day!

Similarly, the quality of the substitute care that children receive while their parents are at work also matters. Young children do need security, and research shows that it is not good to have a constant turnover of parent-substitutes, a rapid succession of changing babysitters (Maccoby, 1958).

But that is not the same as adding additional, relatively permanent adults to the child's life. In previous years, the extended family accomplished this automatically; any one of several adults might be tending to the child's needs on any specific occasion. Even today, 35% of all working women still turn to their own relatives for substitute child care during their working hours. In addition, however, there are many middle-aged women, both in and out of the labor force, whose main fulfillment in life has been the raising of their own children. In preference either to their current idleness or the dull routine of low-level jobs, such women would probably like nothing more than to have the opportunity to participate in the rearing of still another child.

But the status of child care as an occupation must be upgraded--these women will not answer ads for *"cleaning woman."* Accordingly, Alice Rossi (1965) has suggested that a course of study be developed which would yield a certificate in practical mothering, much like the current certificate in practical nursing. This program could offer courses in first aid, in child development, in games and crafts for young children, and in the special nature of the child--mother-subsitute relationship.

But at its best, this solution is expensive and hence available only to relatively wealthy couples. Far more important is the establishment of government-sponsored child care centers. Every woman's rights organization, no matter how conservative, is in agreement on this central issue: that free child care centers should be available, like public schools, parks, and libraries, for those who want to use them. In 1970, the President's Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities asserted that:

> "Our national goal should be a system of well-run child care centers available to all pre-school children. Although priority would be given the needs of low-income working mothers, the facilities should be available to middle income mothers who wish to use them." (p.13)

But mothers must feel free to utilize these alternative arrangements for child care. For it is here that America's sex-role ideology intrudes once again. Many people still assume that if a woman wants a full-time career, then children must be unimportant to her. But of course, no one makes this assumption about her husband. No one assumes that a father's interest in his career necessarily precludes a deep and abiding affection for his children or a vital interest in their development. Once again, America applies a double standard of judgment. Suppose that a father of small children suddenly lost his wife. No matter how much he loved his children, no one would expect him to sacrifice his career in order to stay home with them on a full-time basis--even if he had an independent source of income. No one would charge him with selfishness of lack of parental feeling if he sought professional care for his children during the day.

It is here that full equality between husband and wife assumes its ultimate importance. The fully equalitarian marriage abolished this double standard and extends the same freedom to the mother. The equalitarian marriage provides the framework for both husband and wife to pursue careers which are challenging and fulfilling and, at the same time, to participate equally in the

pleasures and responsibilities of child-rearing. Indeed, it is the equalitarian marriage which has the potential for giving children the love and concern of two parents rather than one. And it is the equalitarian marriage which has the most potential for giving parents the challenge and fulfillment of two worlds--family and career--rather than one.

Does the equalitarian marriage have any serious drawbacks? We don't think so. In fact, we think it holds great promise for future relations between the sexes. Not only does it enable both husband and wife to participate in the worlds of family and career, but, in addition, it encourages a person to marry his or her *"best friend."* Many current divorces share the unhappy fact that the husband's career enables him to continue to grow, whereas the homemaker role -- or the dead-end job designed to *"put him through school"* -- often stifles his wife. Once the romance fades, the husband and wife have little in common beside the children. A love relationship between two equally active *"best friends"* is likely to be far more stable.

An equal relationship also enables both husband and wife to step out of their stereotyped social roles. No longer need husbands pretend to be ever strong and brave and aggressive. Perhaps men will have fewer heart attacks when they are allowed to express their emotions openly and when they are able to share the responsibility for breadwinning without feeling the stigma of being *"unmasculine."* Certainly women will make fewer trips to the psychiatrist when they no longer have to define their identities solely through the accomplishments of their husbands and children.

Preparing For The Future: The Role of the Guidance Counselor

No one can predict the future with certainty, but a number of trends are now emerging which will ultimately make it possible for women to achieve equality in the world of work. New laws are ending sex discrimination in employment; and increasing numbers of both men and women are becoming sensitized to the more subtle forms of prejudice and discrimination which derive from America's sex-role ideology. Coming years will see the establishment of child care centers, either attached to universities and other large-scale organizations or sponsored by the government. And, concern about population growth will discourage young women from looking to child-bearing as their primary means of fulfillment. No longer will *"another child"* be an acceptable solution to the emptiness a mother must face when her earlier children go off to school. Accordingly, women will look increasingly to the world of work for personal fulfillment. We already know that a college education increases the likelihood of a woman's working; and as more and more women obtain higher education our society will begin to feel even more painfully the strains of a labor pool overqualified for clerical and domestic work. Furthermore, as today's idealistic young men and women start families of their own, the equalitarian marriage is likely to become commonplace rather than radical. In addition, part-time work is likely to become increasingly available, both for women and for men. Finally, the visibility of the *"women's liberation"* movement will accelerate every one of these trends. Indeed, we predict that equality between the sexes will be the dominant social issue of the 1970's.

The guidance counselor is strategically placed either to act as a catalyst for these forces or to counsel young men and young women into a stereotype of work and family which no longer matches reality. Because most adolescents are not yet sensitive to these trends and because young girls have already learned to limit their horizons to home and family, the guidance counselor must be prepared to act as a social change agent.

If we truly believe that every young person should be free to pursue whatever vocation he or she desires; if we really believe that the counselor's function is to help the young person to make an informed choice from among a wide panorama of possibilities, then we must once again come face to face with the fact that our society's sex-role ideology has already drastically reduced the number of alternatives that the female adolescent is psychologically prepared to consider. Her so-called *"freedom of choice"* is illusory. The counselor must take responsibility for awakening young women to an entire spectrum of new possibilities.

It is not sufficient merely to inform women that their horizons need not be limited in this way, that women are now being accepted–even recruited–into professions that previously were closed to them. The psychological effects of their sex-role conditioning will not vanish that easily.

What is required is far more revolutionary. What is required is the beginning of a thorough re-education. Every female adolescent must be encouraged to question the role of *"woman"* that she has assimilated from her parents and from her culture. Every girl who has ever hidden her intelligence for fear of losing her popularity has already experienced in miniature the psychological conflicts that lead women to anticipate disaster if they-or any woman–should come out ahead of some man academically or professionally. These girls must be forced to confront this sex-role schizophrenia when it first appears. The conflicts must be recognized if a woman's potential for self-fulfillment is ever to be realized.

What can a guidance counselor do?

(1) Prepare the way for an *"identity crisis."*

College counselors report that at about age eighteen, men undergo an *"identity crisis."* That is, they begin to ask themselves the following kinds of questions: *"Who am I? What do I want to become? What occupation will I find most fulfilling? What style of life is really me?"* This re-evaluation of previously unexamined assumptions about themselves has long been recognized by psychologists as a prerequisite for full maturity.

But among college women, identity crises are conspicuously absent. Because our society provides ready-made answers for women–*"You will be John's wife and Mary's mother"*–young women see no need to ask these kinds of questions. If women are ever to discover their own identities, if women are ever to live up to their own potential, they must be forced to question the adequacy of these ready-made answers as early as possible.

We recognize that counseling theory generally discourages the attempt to restructure the counselee's current value system. But to avoid challenging the framework of today's female adolescent is to abdicate responsibility for women in the 1970's. No female in our society today is free to make a truly personal choice regarding vocation or life style until she has begun to question society's ready-made values and priorities.

Whether she begins to take herself and her work-life seriously at eighteen or not, decisions which are intimately bound up with *"woman's place"* will recur again and again in her life. Should she drop out of college in order to put her husband through medical school? (Would he be expected to do the same for her?) Should she quit her job when the children are young? (Couldn't she and her husband each arrange to work part-time?) Should she do all the household chores even though both she and her husband work eight-hour days? Should she leave her job or school because her husband has a better job offer in another city? The adolescent still has all of her major life decisions ahead of her. She must be encouraged to critically examine the role of *"woman"* now–before she finds herself trapped by relatively irreversible decisions about education, marriage, and children. The decision she makes tomorrow may not change, but a process of serious self-examination will reverberate throughout the many decisions she makes over the course of her lifetime. It may lead her, at thirty-five, to apply to medical school rather than to secretarial school.

We suggest that this process can best be facilitated through a course on the role of women and the nature of America's sex-role ideology. Such a course (or series of group discussions) would place America's sex-role practices into historical, anthropological, sociological, and psychological perspective. It would sensitize women to their own sex-role conditioning, and it would provide a forum in which they could begin to examine their own incipient conflicts about whether it is possible for a woman to be successful both professionally and socially.[6]

Professional women–both from within the school and from the surrounding community–should be invited to participate in the course and to discuss their personal experiences. Women active in the struggle for equal rights–members of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL), for example–should be invited to discuss the nature of discrimination against women and the steps being taken to end that discrimination. In addition, undergraduate women on college campuses across the country are eager to have the opportunity to talk to high-school girls about the changes they have undergone and the conflicts they have felt. This is potentially the most credible and persuasive group of all. Contact the college YWCA or NOW group on the campus nearest you.

Women desperately need to have successful role models available to them as they begin to make their life decisions. At the moment, the only adult role models most of them have ever seen are teachers, nurses, secretaries, librarians, sales clerks, and mothers. As noted earlier, mothers who work have daughters who want to work. The power of a positive role model is not to be underestimated.

Finally, the subject of women's roles should begin to crop up fairly regularly in the school. Pamphlets from the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor should be easily accessible. Teachers should be encouraged to devote a unit of English or History or Sociology to the subject of women. Students should be encouraged to write papers on the topic. Perhaps one P.T.A. meeting could be set aside for a speech on the subject. (Both the National Organization for Women and the Women's Equity Action League have Speakers' Bureaus for just this purpose.) New books on the women's liberation movement are being released every day. These books should

---

[6]Colleges and universities have been preparing courses like these. For suggested curriculum materials, write KNOW, 726 St. James St., Pgh., Pa. 15232

be displayed prominently in the school library. On career days, professional women should be sought to represent occupations generally considered the province of men. Finally, interested students themselves should be consulted for suggestions about school programs on the subject.

(2) When counseling women, don't be *"realistic."*

Too many bright women are counseled away from professions that would really challenge them and into paths that are considered to be *"more realistic"* for a woman. Similarly, whereas gifted boys are inevitably encouraged to attend the best colleges, regardless of geographical location, girls of equal intelligence are often packed off to *"good"* local schools because they will *"just be getting married anyway."* And women who are not planning to attend college are rarely encouraged to consider training for relatively high-paying jobs as electricians or plumbers, despite the fact that the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of sex.

Even more to the point, because it is true that most girls grow up to be wives and mothers, counselors have consistently urged female adolescents to plan for a life of *"multiple roles."* The ever-present, never-questioned assumption that the woman's work-life would be characterized by discontinuity, compromise, and coordination has effectively prevented women from aspiring toward challenging, long-term commitments in fields like law or medicine or science or politics. It has forced women to consider seriously only those occupations which do not involve lengthy training and which allow for discontinuous employment, i.e., secretary or nurse or teacher.

Again we ask: Why is it the wife who must be responsible for running the household? We recognize that a fully equalitarian relationship may seem very radical. But just as most girls grow up to be wives and mothers, so, too, do most boys grow up to be husbands and fathers. Even if a couple decided that their relationship is not going to be *fully* equalitarian, there is still no reason for the woman to be the only one who has to worry about coordinating family with career.

There is a temptation for counselors to make two kinds of errors in the guidance of young girls: either they treat girls exactly like boys, without recognizing that the number of alternatives psychologically open to them must be drastically expanded; or they treat girls like future wives and mothers who must *"realistically"* plan for the discontinuity, compromise, and coordination necessary in a life of multiple roles. Perhaps it is time we recognized that men also play multiple roles. Perhaps it is time we worried a bit less about the girl's future role as wife and mother, and worried a bit more about the boy's future role as husband and father. Perhaps it is time we encouraged the young boy to think more about how he was going to coordinate *his* career with home and family.

There is at least one other group in our society which has suffered the consequences of *"realistic"* advice. Many black men and women are now justifiably bitter that they are not in a position to take advantage of newly opening opportunities because high school teachers and counselors guided them away from academic courses and into vocational ones.

"Don't misunderstand me now. We all here like you, you know that. But you've got to be realistic about being a nigger. A lawyer–that's no realistic goal for a nigger. You need to think about something you *can* be. You're good with your hands....Why don't you plan on carpentry?"

High school English teacher to Malcolm X.
From *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, p. 36.

The moral is clear: It is better to prepare a woman for a career which she may later decline than to prematurely limit her capabilities. The best counseling is that which leaves open the largest spectrum of possibilities. A nuclear physicist can easily become a clerk-typist if she (or he) so decides; the reverse path is known to be more difficult.

(3) Remove sources of sex-role stereotyping within the school.

Courses in cooking and sewing prepare women for homemaking. Courses in typing, bookkeeping, and shorthand prepare women for clerical work. But these are only two of the many occupations that a woman might choose to pursue. Women must not be guided into these courses just because they are women. And to *require* such courses of women--but not of men--is blatant discrimination which perpetuates the second-class status of women in our society.

* * *

Our culture forces female adolescents to spend an inordinate amount of time thinking about their adequacy as women. It is time for guidance counselors to deflect some of that energy into concern for their adequacy as human beings.

References

Barry, H., III, Bacon, M. K., & Child, I. L. A cross-cultural survey of some sex differences in socialization. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 1957, 55, 327-332.

Bem, S. L., & Bem, D. J. Case study of a nonconscious ideology: training the woman to know her place. In D. J. Bem, *Beliefs, attitudes, and human affairs*. Belmont, Calif.: Brooks/Cole, 1970. (a)

Bem, S. L. & Bem, D. J. Sex-segregated want ads: do they discourage female job applicants? Unpublished preprint, Department of Psychology, Carnegie-Mellon University.

Bird, C. *Born female: the high cost of keeping women down*. New York: Pocket Books, 1969.

Broverman, I. K., Broverman, D. M., Clarkson, F. E., Rosenkrantz, P. S., & Vogel, S. R. Sex-role stereotypes and clinical judgments of mental health. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 1970, 34, 1-7.

Broverman, D. M., Klaiber, E. L., Kobayashi, Y., & Vogel, W. Roles of activation and inhibitation in sex differences in cognitive abilities. *Psychological Review*, 1968, 75, 23-50.

Brown, R. *Social psychology*. New York: Free Press, 1965.

Crandall, V. J., & Rabson, A. Children's repetition choices in an intellectual achievement situation following success and failure. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 1960, 97, 161-168.

Dodge, N. D. *Women in the Soviet economy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966.

Erikson, E. H. Womanhood and the inner space. In *Identity: youth and crisis*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1968. Pp. 261-294.

Fisher, E. The second sex, junior division. *The New York Times Book Review*, May, 1970.

Flanagan, J. C. Project talent. Unpublished manuscript.

Gallup, G., & Hill, E. The American Woman. *The Saturday Evening Post*, Dec. 22, 1962, pp. 15-32.

Goldberg, P. Are women prejudiced against women? *Transaction*, April 1968, 5, 28-30.

Goldberg, S., & Lewis, M. Play behavior in the year-old infant: early sex differences. *Child Development*, 1969, 40, 21-31.

Gottesman, I. I. Heritability of personality: a demonstration. *Psychological Monographs*, 1963, 77 (Whole No. 572).

Horner, M. S. Fail: bright women. *Psychology Today*, November, 1969.

Kagan, J. Acquisition and significance of sex typing and sex role identity. In M. L. Hoffman and L. W. Hoffman (Eds.), *Review of child development research, Vol. I.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1964. Pp. 137-167.

Kagan, J. The child's sex role classification of school objects. *Child Development,* 1964, 35, 1051-1056.

Maccoby, E. E. Effects upon children on their mothers' outside employment. In *Work in the lives of married women.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1958.

Malxolm X. *The autobiography of Malcolm X.* New York: Grove Press, 1966.

McDavid, J. W. Imitative behavior in preschool children. *Psychological Monographs,* 1959, 73 (Whole No. 486).

Mead, M. *Sex and temperament.* New York: Morrow, 1935.

Milton, G. A. Five studies of the relation between sex role identification and achievement in problem solving. Technical report No. 3, Department of Industrial Administration, Department of Psychology, Yale University, December, 1958.

Nye, F. I., & Hoffman, L. W. The employed mother in America. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963.

Ringo, M. The well-placed wife. Unpublished manuscript, John Paisios & Associates, 332 South Michigan Ave., Chicago, Illinois. 60604.

Rossi, A. S. Equality between the sexes: an immodest proposal. In R. J. Lifton (Ed.), *The woman in America.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965.

Sears, R. R., Maccoby, E. E., & Leving, H. Patterns of child rearing. Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson, 1957.

Smith, M. E. The influence of age, sex, and situation on the frequency of form and functions of questions asked by preschool children. *Child Development,* 1933, 3, 301-213.

Spock, B. Should mothers work? *Ladies' Home Journal,* February, 1963.

Strecker, E. A. *Their mothers' sons.* Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1946.

Terman, L. M., & Oden, M. H. *Genetic studies of genius, V. The gifted group at mid-life: Thirty-five years' follow-up of the superior child.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1959.

Torrance, E. P. *Guiding creative talent.* Englewood Cliffs, N.Y.: Prentice-Hall, 1962.

U. S. Department of Labor, Wage and Labor Standards Administration, Women's Bureau. Fact sheet on the earnings gap, February, 1970.

U. S. Department of Labor, Wage and Labor Standards Administration, Women's Bureau. *Handbook on women workers,* 1969. Bulletin 294.

Yarrow, M. R., Scott, P., de Leeuw, L., & Heinig, D. Child-rearing in families of working and non-working mothers. *Sociometry,* 1962, 25, 122-140.